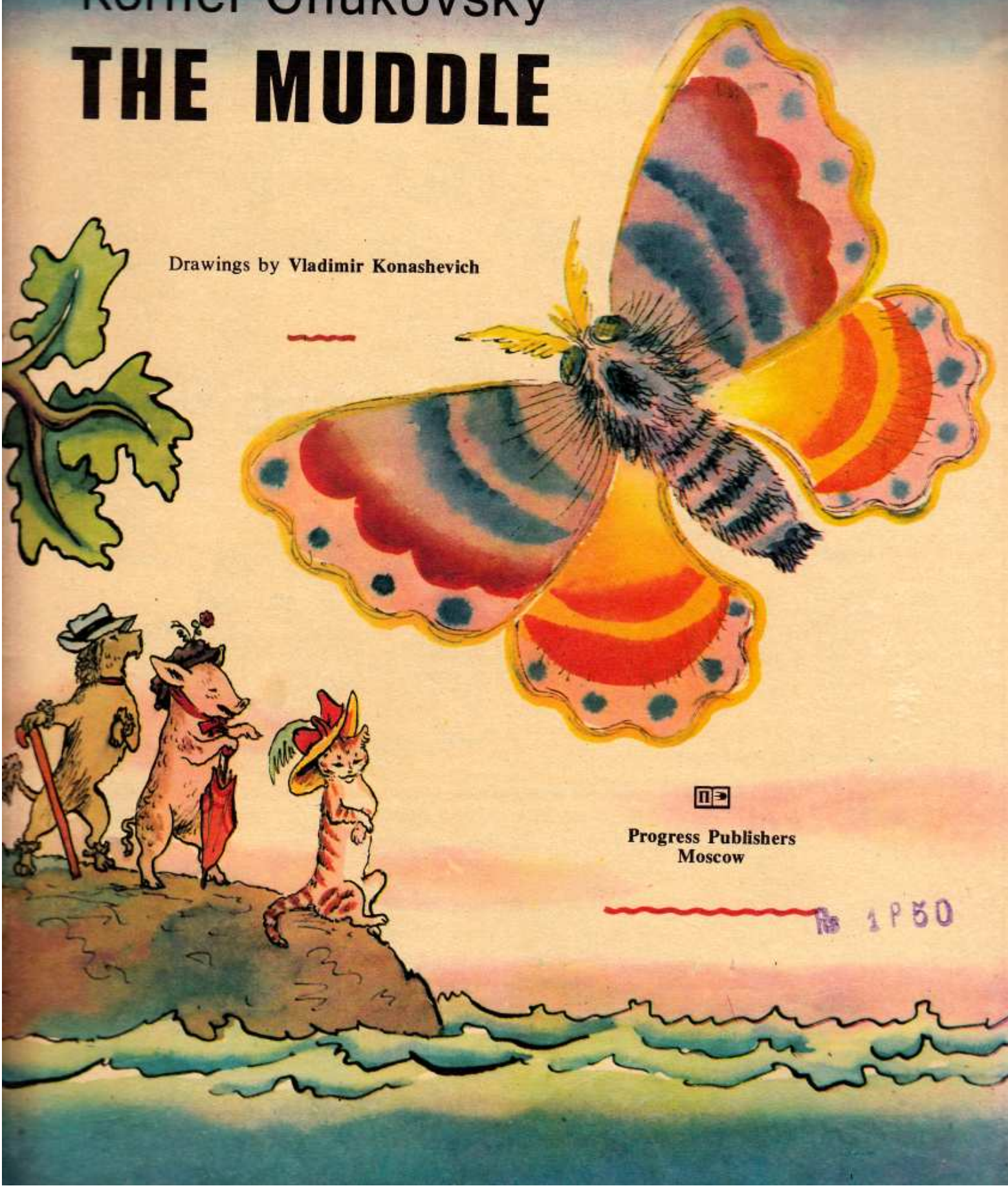
Kornei Chukovsky

THE MUDDLE

Drawings by **Vladimir Konashevich**



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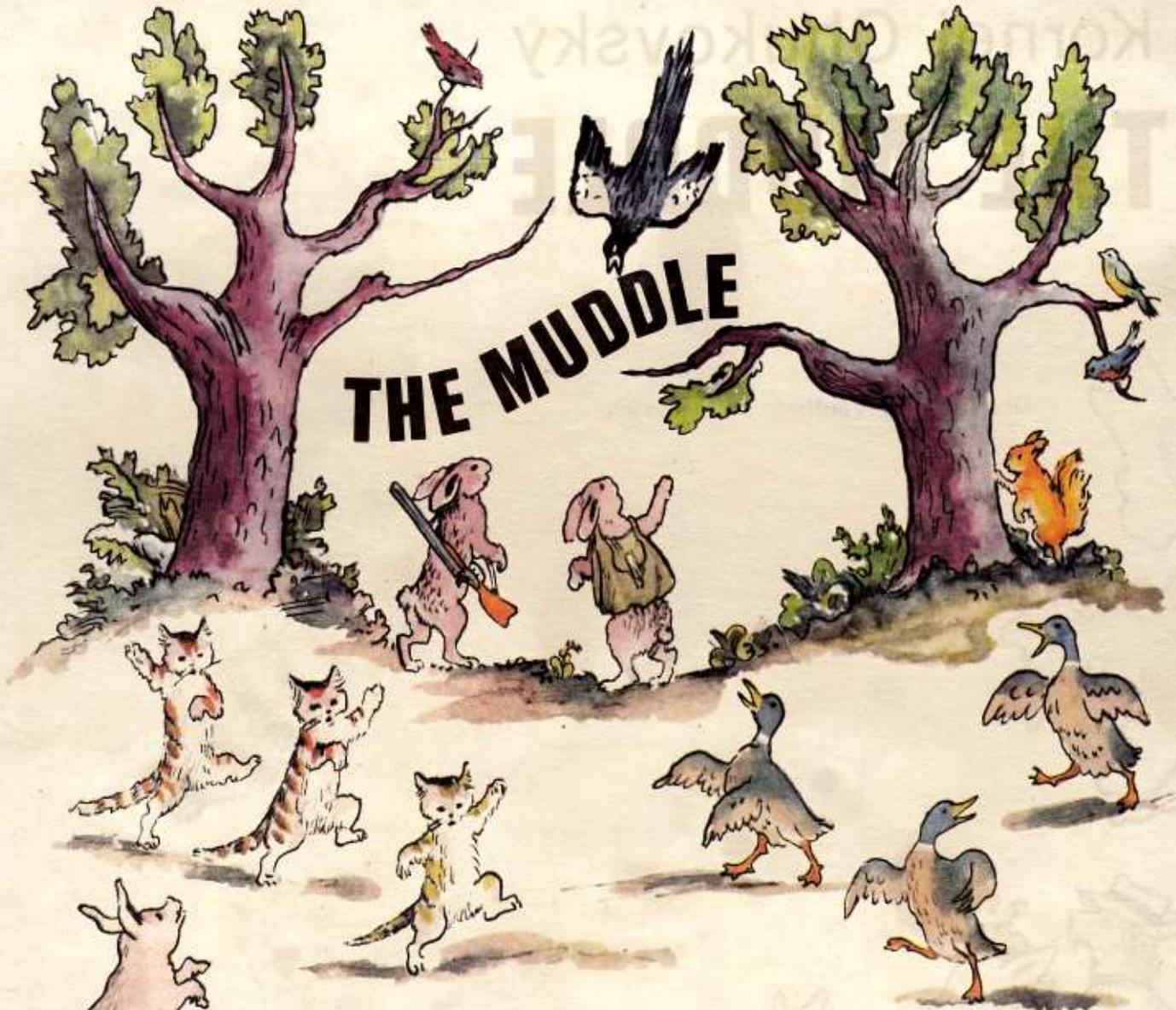
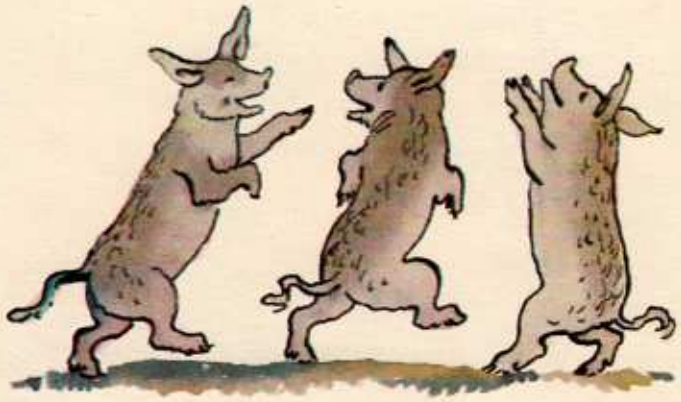


THE MUDDLE

Once the kittens raised a row:
"Oh, how dull it is to miaow!
Let us better bark like doggies:
Bow-wow-wow!"

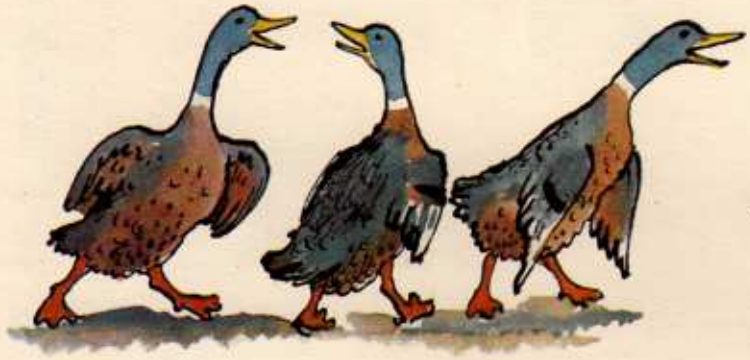
After that the ducklings spoke:
"What's the good of quacking, folk?
Let us better croak like froggies:
Croak-croak-croak!"

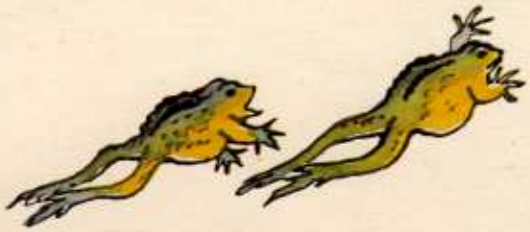


So the piglets started miaowing:
"*Miaow-miaow-miaow!*"

And the cats began bow-wowing:
"*Bow-wow-wow!*"

And the ducklings started croaking:
"*Croak-croak-croak!*"





And the chickens started quacking:
"*Quack-quack-quack!*"

Then the sparrow hopped along
And began a milk-cow's song:
"*Moo-oo-oo!*"

Then came Bruin-Touzled-Fur
And instead of *gr-gr-gr*
Said "*Cockadoodledoo!*"

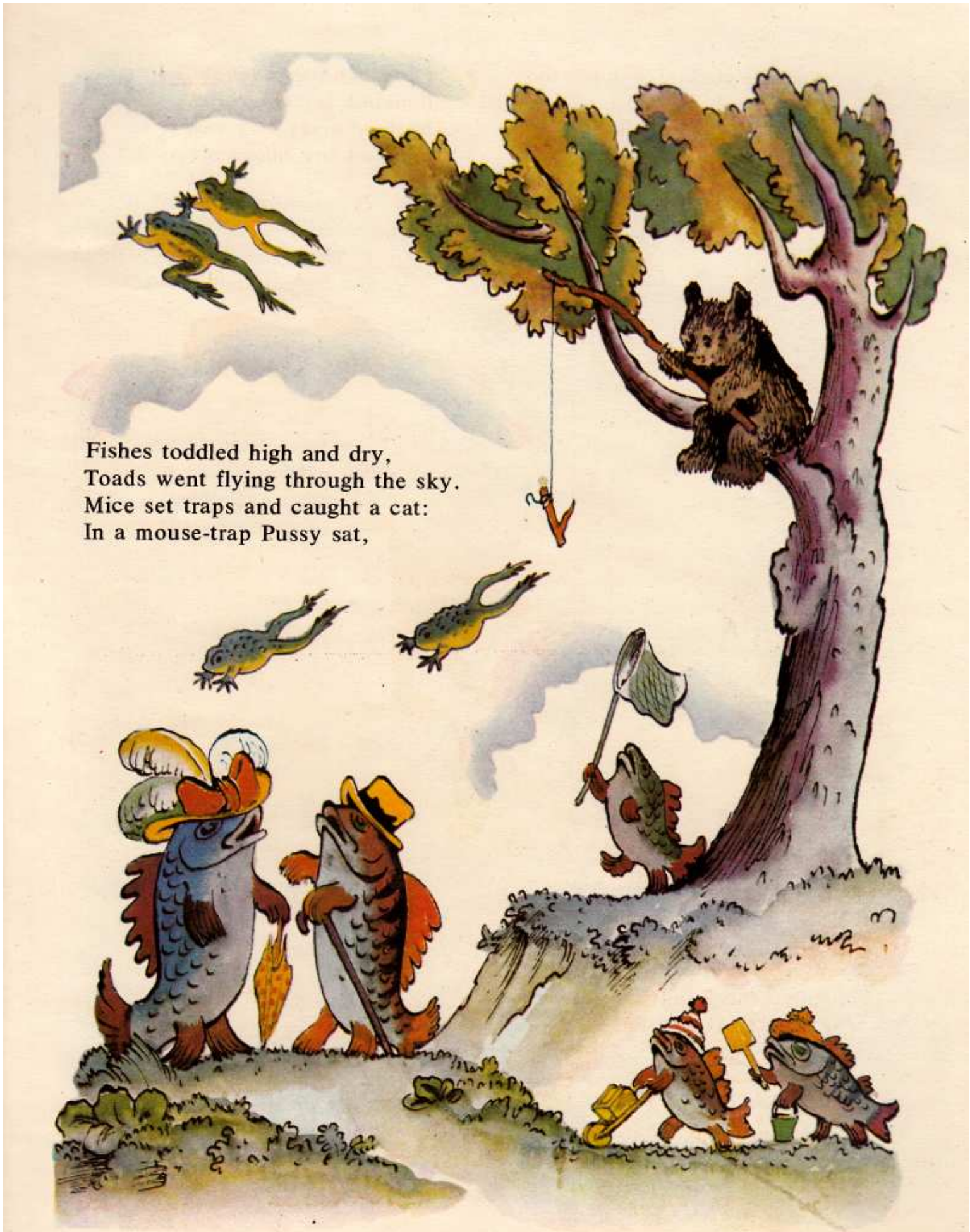
And the cuckoo shouted too:
"Why have I to say *cu-ckoo*?
Let me grunt like little piggies:
Oink-oink-oink!"

"Those who say *miaow*
Shouldn't say *bow-wow*.
Those who say *bow-wow*
Shouldn't say *miaow*.

Only little Bunny
Didn't think it funny
To say *miaow*
Or *bow-wow-wow*.
He lay beneath a cabbage-head
And in bunny-language said
To coax his naughty playmates:

Toads don't fly and flies don't browse
Nor can crows turn into cows!"

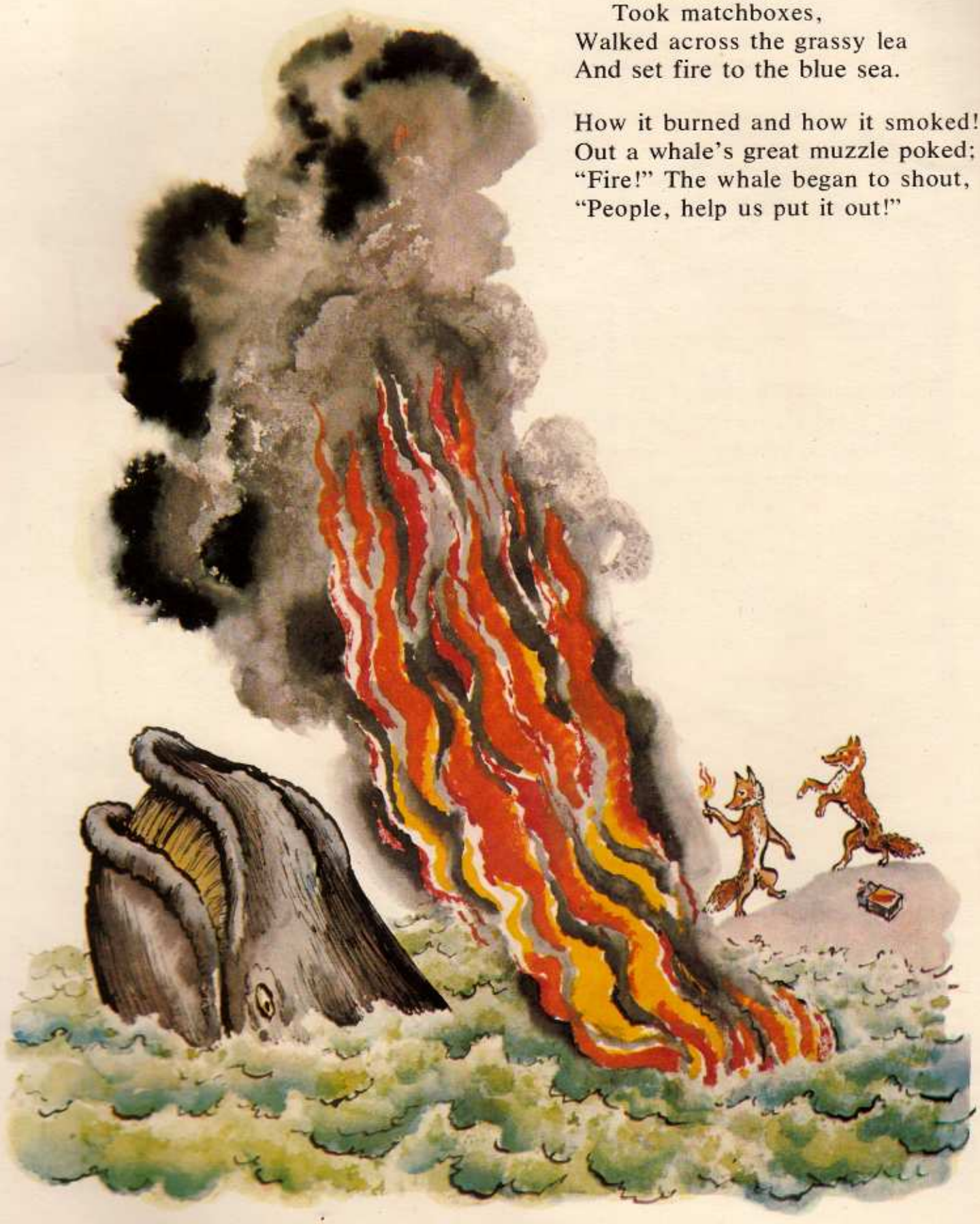
But the merry cubs and chicks
Wouldn't stop their naughty tricks,
But went on to shout and roar,
Even louder than before.



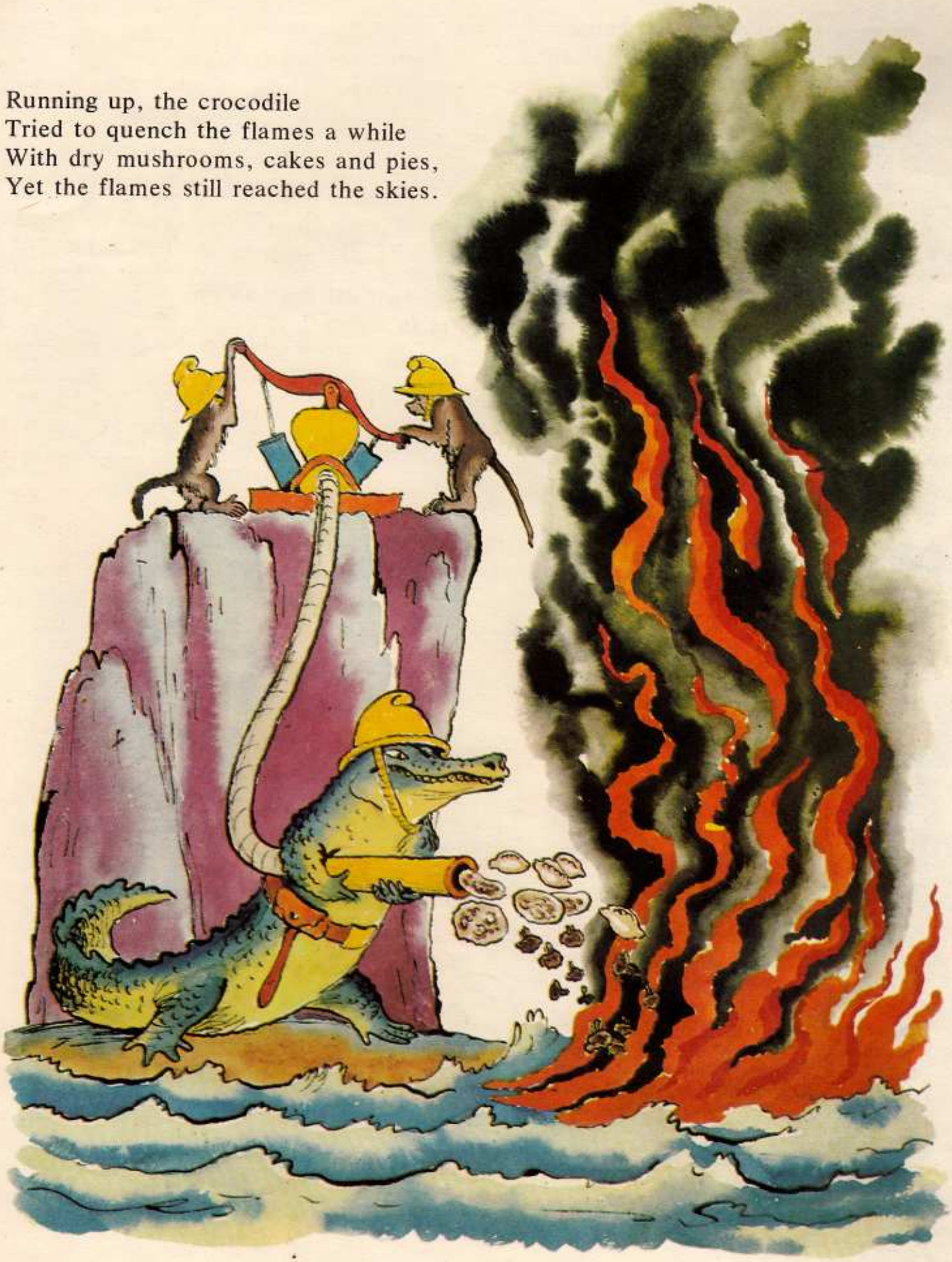
Fishes toddled high and dry,
Toads went flying through the sky.
Mice set traps and caught a cat:
In a mouse-trap Pussy sat,

While the foxes
Took matchboxes,
Walked across the grassy lea
And set fire to the blue sea.

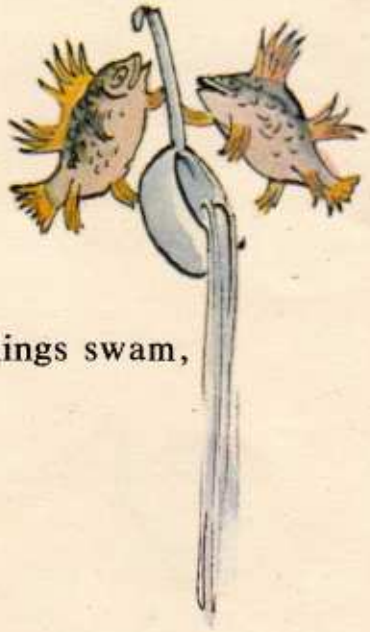
How it burned and how it smoked!
Out a whale's great muzzle poked;
"Fire!" The whale began to shout,
"People, help us put it out!"



Running up, the crocodile
Tried to quench the flames a while
With dry mushrooms, cakes and pies,
Yet the flames still reached the skies.

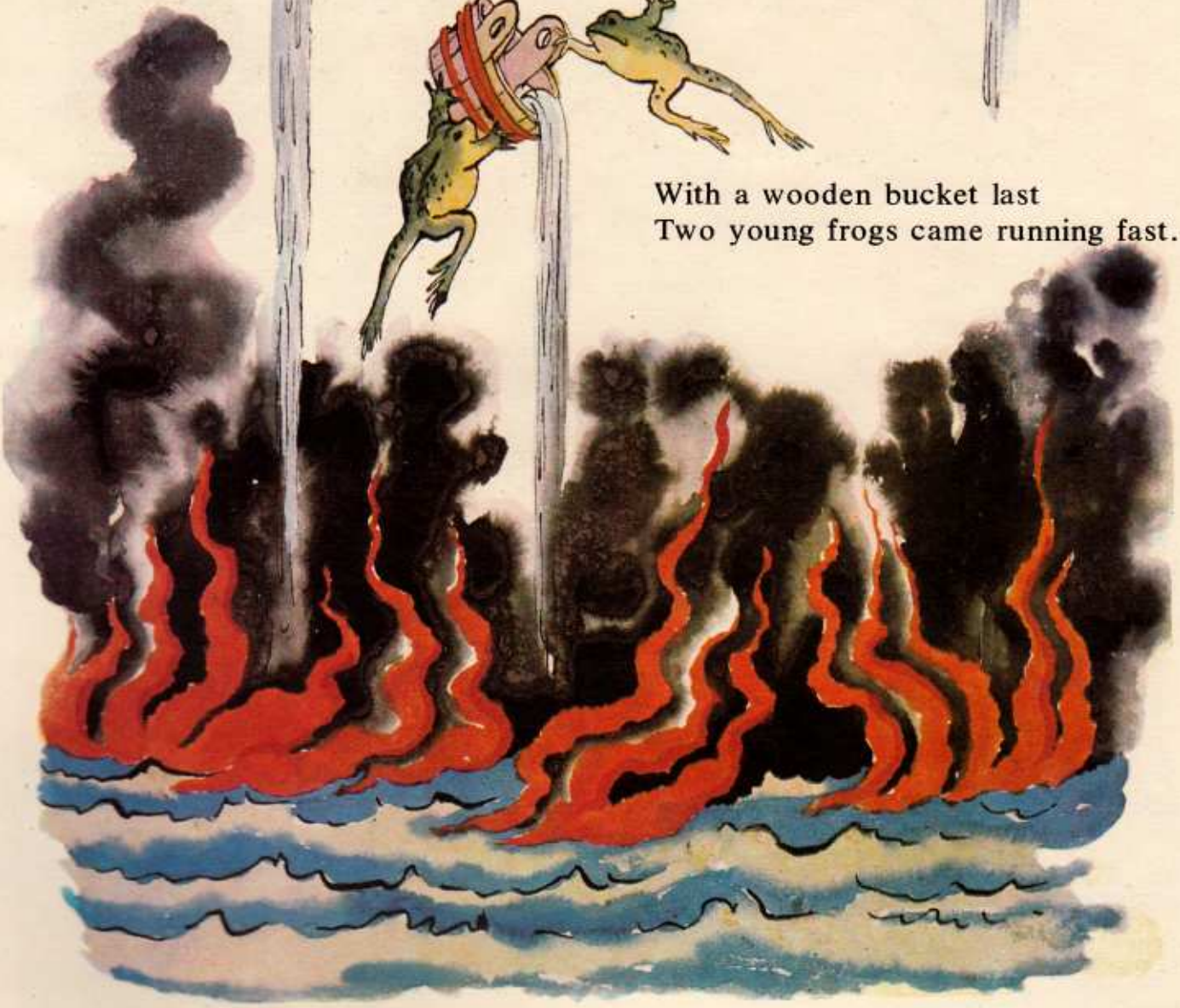


With a barrel came two hens,
But the flames were too immense.



From the lakes two rufflings swam,
Bringing water in a pan.

With a wooden bucket last
Two young frogs came running fast.



Long they poured and poured and poured,
But the flames just roared and roared.

Then a butterfly flew by,
Flapped and fluttered from the sky;
Quieter, quieter grew the flames
And went out.

Full of joy, the beasts and birds
Danced and sang in flocks and herds,
Stamped their feet and wagged their tales
Over all the woods and dales.

Baby goslings honked once more
As they used to do before:
"*Honk-honk-honk*!"

Cats and kittens purred and miaowed:
"*Miaow-miaow-purr*!"

And the birdies sang aloud:
"*Tweet-tweet-tweet*!"

Foals and colts began to neigh:
"*Hee-haw-haw*!"

Flies and beetles buzzed away:
"*Zzz-zz-zz*!"

And the little froggies croaked:
"*Croak-croak-croak*!"

And the little ducklings quacked:
"*Quack-quack-quack*!"

Beasts and birds, both tame and wild,
Flocking in from earth and sky,
Sang in chorus to my child:
"*Lulla-lulla-by*!"

Translated from the Russian
by Dorian Rottenberg

К. Чуковский

ПУТАНИЦА

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